

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Belchamp St Paul Church of England Primary School	
Vicarage Road, Belchamp St Paul, Sudbury, Suffolk, CO10 7BP	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese / Methodist District	Chelmsford
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	n/a
Name of multi-academy trust	Diocese of Chelmsford Vine Schools Trust
Date of academy conversion	1 st August 2017
Date of inspection	19 October 2017
Type of school and unique reference number	Academy – Voluntary Aided Equivalent: 144866
Executive Headteacher	Linda Taylor
Head of School	Emma Flin
Inspector's name and number	Andrew Binnell: 665

School context

The school is much smaller than average size. The number on roll has increased since the time when its predecessor school had its denominational inspection in 2012. This resulted in a fourth class being created, so the youngest to be taught separately. Almost all its pupils are White British. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) is below average, as is percentage for whom extra funding is received due to social or economic disadvantage. It became an academy very recently alongside its partner school, Ridgewell Church of England Primary school. St Andrew's is the parish church.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Belchamp St Paul's primary school as a Church of England school are good

- The school's explicit and inclusive Christian values are lived out by the whole school community regardless of background. This leads to strong relationships and supports pupils' very good behaviour.
- The very strong leadership of the church school and the well thought out plans and developments ensure that the Christian foundation continues to shape and drive forward school life and work.
- The positive approach by the staff team in embracing the expectations of the new religious education (RE) curriculum with excitement and a passion is already impacting positively on pupils' attainment and progress

Areas to improve

- In order to enhance pupils' experience of worship enhance the worship programme by increasing the frequency and depth of more formalised Anglican worship practices held in both school and church
- Use the village Anglican church of St Andrew's more effectively as a resource to support RE and the wider curriculum and advance the existing good links
- In order to refine and support improved practice increase the opportunities for leaders of collective worship and RE to liaise more frequently with similar leaders in the Vine Schools Trust

The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is good at meeting the needs of all learners

The school makes its Christian values clear and explicit. The values of hope, respect, friendship, and wisdom, are lived out by pupils and adults across the school. Values are displayed in every classroom in an age appropriate way, giving great meaning to pupils in each of the four classes. A school value is focussed upon over a half term of the school year and has a profile in each classroom, in corridor displays and in the school hall. These displays are regularly updated to keep them relevant. The Christian values contribute highly effectively to the school being a calm and happy place. Pupils can articulate the importance of these values with great maturity. This is well supported through both the worship programme and RE. As a result most members of the school recognise the distinct characteristics of the school's values with these been linked, for example, to biblical teaching. One pupil commented that when she visited the homes of friends she always tried to show respect for their property. The school's curriculum is broad and creative, and there is a good range of extra-curricular clubs and activities for all. These are popular with pupils and uptake is good, providing good opportunities to work together. Pupils' outcomes, based on in school data for 2017 indicate that they are above national averages for both attainment and progress. The leadership of the school has correctly focussed on raising ambitions of all learners. This is because they rightly recognise that the high attainment and progress of pupils is a key expression of the school's Christian mission as a church school. The living out of the school's Christian values in its daily life results in pupils feeling safe and learning effectively. Their wellbeing is taken seriously. Any instances as less than good behaviour are quickly resolved, drawing explicitly on the school's values. One pupil commented, 'teachers always give you support and know us well as individuals,' and another stated, 'teachers help us when we fall over in the playground. We always feel safe at school'. Pupils' are polite and courteous. They are very proud of their school and its Christian foundation. The behaviour of and respect for others, is demonstrated by both adults and pupils and reflects well its Christian foundation. As a result of this pupils want to be at school with evident improvements in pupils' attendance over time. It is currently above the national average. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is good overall. RE provides a range of opportunities to learn about Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism. This contributes positively to their developing understanding of difference and diversity and of Christianity as a worldwide faith. Pupils show positive attitudes towards enjoyment of RE and recognise its importance in their lives. Thus it contributes well to SMSC development and supports the school's Christian foundation well.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Well thought out acts of collective worship form an important part of the school day. They impact positively on the school as a whole and on the lives of the individuals within the community. Worship is well planned for the school year by a range of people. This includes the executive headteacher, the head of school, the clergy and a member of the 'open the book' school ministry team. It is delivered well and is expressly Christian in character. There is a good balance of biblical material and Christian teaching addressed during worship. This enables pupils to deepen their understanding of Jesus and his importance for Christians. Themes are relevant and pay close attention to learners spiritual and moral development. All pupils, irrespective of faith or non-faith background, participate in the worship programme which supports the community feel of the school effectively. Likewise staff engage well with worship and recognise its relevance to school life. Through worship pupils develop a good understanding of principal Christian festivals. They also develop an appreciation of the Christian concept of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit which enhances their understanding of Christian teaching well. Saying the Lord's Prayer, singing Christian hymns and songs and the use of candles are established practice and impact well on pupils' spiritual development. Although there is a firm basis for worship across the school the frequency and depth of formalised Anglican worship in both school and church is more limited. Pupils have a firm understanding of the words and content of the Lord's Prayer and appreciate something of its significance to Christians. Many pupils make use of prayer in their own lives and regularly contribute relevant and appropriate prayers to school worship. Pupils enjoy each act of worship but particularly enjoy their class assembly each week. The worship programme is further enhanced through worship at St Andrew's parish church at Harvest, Christmas and Easter. Further strengthening pupils' participation in school worship has been a recent focus for the school's leadership team. This has led to improved pupil participation. Examples of high quality developments include identified pupils creating a prayer based on the content of their worship. They also summarise the key message to take away to think about for the rest of the day. Likewise, pupils' engagement in planning, leading and evaluating worship is good. This is focused through the school worship group, made up of pupils from each year group. They meet on a monthly basis and are well led by the incumbent of St Andrew's, the parish church of Belchamp St Paul's.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Excellent planning that has gone into preparing for the delivery of the new RE curriculum. The staff of this school and Ridgewell Church of England Primary school have accessed training together to help them plan for the effective delivery of this new curriculum. All members of the staff team have embraced this change as positive. This has generated renewed excitement and passion for the teaching of RE across the school. The subject leader is up to date with RE developments and communicates expectations effectively and supports colleagues in their development of RE well. There is an effective approach to monitoring which enables leaders to have a very good knowledge and understanding of the provision accessed by pupils across the school and its impact on attainment and progress. This typically includes monitoring pupils' learning in the classroom, looking at their books, analysing the progress data and talking to pupils to gain their views of their learning in RE. This gives a holistic view of attainment and progress across the subject. Current standards of attainment, specific to RE, demonstrate that they are in line with their attainment in English and mathematics. This is above national expectations. Learners understand the value of the subject and they mostly learn well. Learners have a good ability to apply skills to understanding the impact of religion on believers. Regular assessments of learning are in place and show that pupils are making good progress, including pupils from disadvantaged groups. RE display is good. Examples of this include high quality age appropriate displays of Bibles in every classroom, applications of the school values to a range of scenarios and corridor displays to showcase world religions such as Holi, the Hindu festival. These bring topics to life and support and express pupils' learning creatively and positively. Teachers have a good overall subject knowledge and as a result teaching is consistently good and sometimes outstanding. Consequently, pupils show interest and enthusiasm for their learning in RE. There is an appropriate balance between learning focused on Christianity and other faiths, for example Hinduism, Islam and Judaism. The school makes insufficient use of the parish church to extend learning about Christianity through first-hand experience and as a resource to support the wider curriculum.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is good

The school has an executive headteacher and a head of school. The executive headteacher also leads Ridgewell Church of England primary school meaning that she spends her time equally across both two schools. The head of school is based at Belchamp St Paul's. Together they articulate and demonstrate very strong leadership of the school's Christian foundation and how it directs school improvement. They have joint responsibility for RE and collective worship, demonstrating the importance placed on these key areas of the school's mission. The leaders exhibit great enthusiasm, passion and skill for these areas of responsibility. There are planned opportunities to attend training and to share this new knowledge with the staff team. They are making full of the opportunities afforded to the school through its involvement in the Diocese of Chelmsford Vine Schools Trust in order to continue development. Together the leaders have worked very effectively with the clergy, governors and the wider staff team, and have successfully built on this school's Christian mission. Leaders of RE and worship have had some limited opportunity to work with their counterparts in the partner school and across the Trust. Partnership with the Diocese is very strong, with regular visits to the school from its diocesan link adviser. This has helped the school to reflect accurately on itself as a church school and contributed effectively to the actions for improvement it has taken. Foundation governors play an active role in evaluating the school and have provided support for its self-evaluation which is focused and precise. This contributes positively to a detailed and accurate self-evaluation of the school as a church school. All members of the staff team feel valued and respected. In turn they inspire high expectations in pupils which impacts positively on academic attainment and progress. Governors are a stable team with a very good range of expertise. They are well led by a highly effective chair of governors who knows the school well and has effectively overseen the school's academy conversion. The clergy are well known to the staff team and pupils alike and they have provided effective pastoral support to the school leaders and the wider staff team. Parents see the school as a caring and inclusive community that puts their children at the heart of its work, based on its Christian values. Statutory requirements for RE and collective worship are met and the leadership of RE and worship is strong and secure. This leads to these areas making substantial contributions to the school's Christian ethos and values and to the attainment and progress of pupils. The school provides effective professional, spiritual and personal development for staff and governors within the context of being a church school. This supports them well in considering possible future leadership in church schools and potentially contribute to the evolution of the Vine Schools Trust.